

Quarterly Report

October-December 1995

Overview

The largely Roswell-driven pace of events dictated by the release of the GAO report and the Air Force's Mogul volume dropped off sharply once the cool days of Fall arrived. Early in October, representatives of CUFOS, MUFON, and the Fund jointly manned a table at the Society of Professional Journalists convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. A UFO briefing book authored by Don Berliner began to take shape, and by the end of December was approaching completion. In mid-December, the heads of the three UFO organizations comprising the C-F-M (Coalition) formalized plans to meet in New York City in January of the new year. Finally, after a long 1995, the Fund hosted a Christmas reception and lecture for supporters and friends who had generously lent their time and effort throughout the year to make regional Fund activities a success. ✱

The St. Paul Convention

Early in 1995, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) invited the Fund to rent a booth at their annual convention, upcoming in October of the year in St. Paul, Minnesota. In view of the expense involved to both rent a booth and staff it with qualified individuals, a proposal to fund the enterprise with Coalition monies and send representatives of the "Big Three" UFO groups was presented at the Spring meeting between the Coalition and Robert Bigelow. The proposal passed unanimously--it was viewed as a fortuitous chance to disseminate high quality UFO information to

working members of the media.

Although the arrangement with the Bigelow Foundation subsequently dissolved, funding for the booth was guaranteed and ultimately provided. Attending the convention on behalf of MUFON was Tom Deuley, the CUFOS representative was Jerome Clark, and Don Berliner and Rob Swiatek were the Fund delegates. During the course of the three-day convention, approximately 100 press kits were distributed and scores of questions answered. Journalists, almost without exception, proved to be very interested in the UFO phenomenon and displayed none of the usual disdain and sarcasm all too often evident in TV and newspaper stories.

The 1996 SPJ convention will be held in the Crystal City area of Arlington, Virginia--adjacent to Washington, D.C.--where it is expected that attendance will exceed significantly that of the 1995 conclave. The Fund anticipates having a booth at this convention and a somewhat more lavish array of publications and handouts for the media. ✱

The Briefing Book Project

Earlier in the year, individuals connected with the BSW Foundation, a non-governmental foundation based in New York City, conceived of the need for a briefing book that would present a sort of "best case" overview of the UFO phenomenon--the strongest evidence in favor of its anomalous nature. Qualified individuals in government,

academia, and the media to whom it was given would then have in hand a factual distillation of the most important sightings and research.

Don Berliner undertook to write the book and by year's end approximately 180 pages had been written, encompassing an introduction and extensive casebook of sightings (Dick Hall subsequently wrote a separate executive summary of the manuscript). Supporting documentation too voluminous to be included in the book will be stored in Dick Hall's residence, where it will be available to recipients of the briefing book who visit or make other arrangements. The book is on track to be printed and distributed in early 1996. ✱

Coalition Update

The end of the Bigelow Foundation's sponsorship of the three major UFO organizations by no means signaled the end of the cooperative relationship the Fund, MUFON, and CUFOS had with one another. All participants apart from Bigelow agreed that the relationship had led to a model arrangement for funding and overseeing UFO research, one that had the potential to make large strides in our understanding of the phenomenon. Even in the relatively short tenure of this first phase of the Coalition, however, some of that potential was realized when several moderately-sized although important projects were expediently completed.

It was felt imperative, therefore, that another meeting be held as soon as possible so work could begin on several new projects for which private support is promised. Chief among these are the completion and distribution of the aforementioned briefing book, the undertaking of an oral history project, and the establishment of a UFO

government documents archives. Additionally, some organizational and methodological details need to be worked out so the "UFO Research Coalition," as it's now being called, can function efficiently to implement proposals. Accordingly, the first meeting of the UFO Research Coalition was scheduled for January 1996 in New York City. ✱

Office Activity and Announcements

Several new projects were approved by the Fund's executive committee during the last quarter of 1995. Researcher Jennie Zeidman was given the go-ahead to travel to Salida, Colorado, for the purpose of providing insight into circumstances surrounding the videotaping and alleged sightings of UFOs there. Jennie's illuminating report on these August 1995 incidents was submitted to the Fund in October (she finds reason to be suspicious of some of the goings-on). Funding for Walt Webb's continuing investigation into the America West airline sighting of May 1995 was extended; Webb will provide the Fund with a summary report of his findings at the end of the investigation. For more than a year, George Filer has been looking into the purported shooting of an alien at Fort Dix, NJ, in 1978--talking with individuals who served on the base, hoping to find new leads. In order to allow this process to continue, he has been allocated additional funds, which should enable him to explore all feasible avenues of approach. Without this supplementary grant, Filer's research would have ended late last Summer. ✱

Publication Improvements

Some of you may have noticed that recent Fund publications have been upgraded. Documents that once would have

been spiralbound as a matter of course are now perfectbound into actual books with printed covers. Others that simply would have been photocopied in the past are being printed as booklets and center-stapled. We at the Fund have long felt that we needed to offer higher quality, more durable publications whenever feasible, publications befitting the importance of the research we support. While we of course cannot completely overhaul our entire publications list, we at least hope that forthcoming titles will reflect this new standard. A number of older, but still popular, items also will be upgraded as current stocks become exhausted.

As a result of the new policy, prices of some future offerings might be slightly higher than their stapled or velobound counterparts. We cannot pretend otherwise. However, the net result will be a professional, longer lasting product that we are sure you will enjoy owning. As always, we would appreciate your suggestions as to how we might improve our documents. ✧

Media Notes

The popular TV show *Sightings* will soon be carried by the USA Network. Until recently the show had been aired on stations owned by Paramount. As a replacement for *Sightings*, Paramount will begin televising *Borderline*, which will focus on the emotional side effects resulting from a UFO sighting or other paranormal encounter.

The producers of *Borderline* have already approached Richard Hall for information on possible UFO sightings that might be featured. Several months ago, Richard Hall appeared on *Sightings*, where he discussed the famous Washington National Airport radar/visual UFO encounters. Hall put the case in context by

talking about then-current fears of a possible Soviet technological breakthrough, the temperature inversion theories the Air Force trotted out to explain the sightings and radar trackings, and the 29 July 1952 Samford press conference devoted entirely to the incidents. ✧

New Publications

Please note two new publications being offered for sale by the Fund: *America West Airline Case--May 25-26, 1995: Interim Report* by Walter N. Webb. At one time spectacular UFO sightings from airliners were a staple of the field. Once in awhile they *still* occur; Walt Webb looks at a vintage example in this preliminary analysis. *Connections* by Beth Collings and Anna Jamerson. This honest, highly-readable book presents the details of a complex series of abductions that have plagued two women from their earliest days to the present. Fund members played a significant role in the initial investigations of their experiences.--Rob Swiatek ✧